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OL. 130 No. 30 Youth Night fills Miss. Coliseum, again

Mississippi Baptist young people and their sponsors filled the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson to overflowing on the evening of July 21 for the annual Mississippi Baptist Youth Night, long the most well-attended Baptist gathering each year in Mississippi. About 9,000 people are present for this year's event.

David Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, delivered the message. Platt, former Dean of Chapel and Assistant Professor of Expository Preaching and Apologetics at New Orleans Seminary, told attendees of his experiences on mission trips to an unnamed country hostile to the Gospel and how Christians there thirsted for the study of God's Word.

Popular Christian musician Steve Fee of Alpharetta, Ga., and his band provided worship through music. Whitney Wilson of Ecru, a former Speakers Tournament champion gave her testimony

on, gave her testimony.

"We just want Youth Night to be a positive time of encouragement and challenge for everyone who comes, no matter from what church,"

who comes, no matter from what church," Discipleship and Family Ministry said Harvey Ellis, consultant in the Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board and

"Youth Night should be a refresher for students as they look toward the new school year, a one-night event of students and leadership equipped to make a difference in their homes, their churches, and their campuses," Ellis said. "The purpose is really two-fold: one, as a climax and wrapup for the students' summer, and two, as an opening event for the weeks and

chairman of the Youth Night

months ahead."
Mississippi Baptist Youth
Night is now more than 35
years old. Planners have
experimented over the
years with dual Friday
evening/Saturday morning
events and even moved to
Veterans Memorial Stadium
in Jackson for a couple of
years, but Youth night has
always returned to the single Friday night format.

"For many churches, it's the high point of their summer and sometimes their only major event. Churches see the value of a big group event like Youth Night. Momentum in a youth group is started by seeing literally thousands of other students from all over Mississippi gathered for the same purpose

Mississippi gathered for the same purpose.

"It gives them the opportunity to be a part of something bigger than themselves. It's a boost for the revitalization of ministry to their communities. There's a positive example in seeing so many other students participating in Youth

Night," Ellis said.

Ellis commended the member of the Youth Night planning committee, which he credited for the immense success of the 2006 event and Youth Nights of years past. The members of the 2006 planning committee were:

 Mike Brister, youth minister at First Church, Brookhaven.

 Lance Word, youth minister at Poplar Springs Drive Church, Meridian.

Justin "Fish" Robinson, youth minister at North Oxford Church, Oxford.
Gary Watts, who is starting a new

church in Raymond.

Ellis said the planning committee welcomes suggestions and comments from Youth Night participants. The committee can be contacted at: Harvey Ellis, Discipleship and Family Ministry Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3286 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 286. Femail: heelis@mbch.org

toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 286. E-mail: hgellis@mbcb.org.

Mississippi Baptist Youth Night 2007 is scheduled for July 20 at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson.





UNITED IN PRAISE — Christian pop musician Steve Fee invites attendees to join him in praising the Lord as he performs for Mississippi Baptist Youth Night on July 21 at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson. Fee recently released his CD, Sacred Spaces, and is working on a new collection of music for his next CD. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)



FROM THE WORD — David Platt, pastor of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, delivers the message to an overflow crowd at Mississippi Baptist Youth Night on July 21 at Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson. Platt is the former Dean of Chapel and Assistant Professor of Expository Preaching and Apologetics at New Orleans Seminary. (Photo by William H. Perkins Jr.)

# EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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# Alcohol and our witness

To one can deny that the effects of alcohol consumption are all around us, every day. As individuals, can there be a Mississippian alive today who has not experienced the disgrace and tragedy of alcohol in some ways. tragedy of alcohol in some way, large or small? As a society, is there any doubt that alcohol has taken a toll on such a massive scale as to be virtually uncountable?
From Death row at Parchman

to the overflowing battered family shelters that now dot Mississippi in increasing numbers, alcohol has diminished

humanity in unspeakable ways.
Yet there are Baptists among
us who still believe that the use of
alcohol is permissible and has no effect on our witness when used in moderation. During a ridicu-lously-long debate on a resolu-tion reaffirming our historical opposition to the use of alcohol at the Southern Baptist Convention a few weeks ago in Greensboro, N.C., Benjamin Cole, pastor of Parkview Church in Arlington, Texas, said the convention was in

danger of "misstepping" if it adopted "a position that is contrary to what the Bible teaches in the flexibility of the scriptural admonitions as they relate to the consumption of alcoholic beverages." erages." Tom Ascol, pastor of Grace Church in Cape Coral, Fla., argued, "Christ turned water into wine."

What an embarrassment of perversity and twisted logic.

Although the resolution eventually passed by a four-fifths majority, the debate betrayed a disgraceful attitude among some Baptists toward the drug (yes, alcohol is a drug) that has destroyed more lives, families, and careers than all other causes combined — but we continue to waste our time defending the "flexibility of the scrip-tural admonitions" where alcohol is concerned.

If there is anyone who still doubts the ability of alcohol use to adversely affect our Christian witness to a lost world, the sorry lot of Mel Gibson should put that argument to rest. As we are all aware, the producer, director, and unmovable force behind the movie, The Passion of the Christ, was recently arrested in California for allegedly speeding and driving under the influence of alcohol.

That was bad enough, but his alcoholinduced, out of control behavior after he
was stopped by a deputy sheriff was
even more troubling. He allegedly threatened officers and attempted to escape. Worse still, news reports indicate that he launched into a string of anti-Semitic remarks that, in the minds of many non-Christians, only reinforced such accusations made against him during the filming of The Passion of the Christ.
The fallout has been far-reaching.

Rabbi Abraham Foxman, head of the Anti-Defamation League who previously complained The Passion of the Christ was anti-Semitic, was not impressed with Gibson's apology. "His tirade finally

reveals his true self and shows that his protestations during the debate over his film The Passion of the Christ that he was such a tolerant, loving person were

a sham," Foxman said.

Bob Waliszewski, media specialist with Focus on the Family in Colorado Springs, Co., told Associated Press, "If he really was drunk, that is wrong for anyone with his visibility, especially with the idea that he is claiming to be a Christian. I share the concerns many

people are feeling right now."
The ABC television network announced that it was pulling out of a planned miniseries on the Holocaust to be produced by Gibson, and Disney has not yet commented on the status of their involvement with Gibson's latest film Apocaplypto, which revolves around the Mayan civilization in Central America and is set for release in December.

Some entertainment industry observers are predicting that Gibson's "A-List" career is over. Fair or not, that probably will be the case. He has let down a lot of people who supported him without reservation during the controversies over the Passion of the Christ, including many Baptists and Baptist organizations. Like many millions before him, alcohol has now ruined his life and defaced his witness ness - another victory for Satan.

"I have battled with the disease of alcoholism for all of my adult life and profoundly regret my horrific relapse," Gibson said in his apology.

So do we, Mel. So do we.

The sky is falling, again. this how Armageddon begins?" one worried pundit asked about the rapid escalation of combat between Israel and Hezbollah forces in Lebanon.

The same question arises with every major flare-up in the Middle East because of the region's volatility and its role in biblical prophecy about the end times. It was asked in 1948, 1967, and 1973, when Israel fought wars for survival with the wider Arab world, and in 1982 when Israel invaded and occupied southern Lebanon.

The current Israeli-Hezbollah conflict appears more limited, despite its heartbreaking human toll and its potential to draw in other regional powers. Intensive efforts to end the fighting quickly — either by military action, diplomatic means or both - have begun.

Yet a sense is growing among some uneasy observers that events in the wider Middle East and beyond are spinning out of control. Among the alarms and warnings from various quarters:

 Hezbollah wants to draw Israel into a long, costly ground war in Lebanon, military analysts say. They predict such a war could become an Iraq-style insurgency, sapping Israeli strength and increasing the regional influence of Hezbollah militants (and their sponsors in Iran and Syria).



The "peace process" Israelis between and Palestinians, long on life supdead. appears Negotiations, withdrawals, even democratic elections seem only to have strengthened the hand of Palestinian militants. Democracy doesn't seem to be doing very well elsewhere in the region, either.

• The Iraq conflict, some contend, has become a civil war between Sunni and Shiite Muslims that will continue until one side or the other prevails or

• The Taliban, apparently alive and kicking in Afghanistan, has embarked on a new offensive and promises to battle Western forces until all foreigners are driven out.

 Civilian deaths in these conflicts are radicalizing Muslims in once-moderate societies, giving new footholds to jihadist groups inspired by Al Qaeda.

Iran appears determined

to develop nuclear weapons.
"One has to wonder sometimes whether a kind of death wish will eventually prevail in the Middle East over the more rational desire for peace and survival," Southern Baptist scholar David P. Gushee of Union University writes in a commentary for ChristianityToday.com.

"It is often said that 'everyone' really wants peace, and that if diplomacy is skillful enough and statesmen are wise enough, then peace will pre-vail," Gushee writes. "I think it is more accurate to say that the desire for peace, while Godgiven, competes in the human heart with the desire for destruction — at least, the destruction of one's enemies.

Destruction seems to be winning at the moment, but there have been many such moments in the history of the Middle East.

Many Christians are caught in the crossfire. Despite their own sufferings, however, Christians are weeping with those who weep, binding the wounds of the hurting, feeding the hungry, and proclaiming the mercy of Christ to those who need it most. Lebanese Baptists and other Christians are doing that right now in and around Beirut as terrified refugees flee the fighting.

Iraqi, Iranian and Afghan believers are doing the same day after day under very difficult circumstances.

The Gospel goes forth amid the storm. That's been the painful but victorious story of painful but victorious story of church history through the ages, particularly over the last century as the Good News has spread in Asia, Africa, and throughout the Muslim world.

Armageddon? It will come one day, but Jesus Himself said that something else must happen first: "And this gospel of the kingdom will be

of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come' (Matthew 24:14, NIV).

We have a lot of preaching to do among the nations before that day comes.

Bridges is a senior writer with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board in Richmond, Va. His column appears courtesy of Baptist Press.

# Mission team back on the ground in Texas

FORNEY, Texas (BP) — Ron Byrd is finally on his way to meet his wife. It has been nine hard days, a rollercoaster ride of emotion. The love of his life, Amy, is a week overdue from a mission trip, one among many Americans stranded in Lebanon when the Israel-Hezbollah conflict exploded.

"I've had some very high moments, some very low moments," Ron says. "I didn't sleep very much. I spent a lot of time praying and looking at the media, communicating with the other families. But you know, the Lord was really good."

Amy arrived home on July 28. She was part of a team from their church — First Church in Forney, Texas, who went to Beirut to work with Lebanese Baptists, helping them distribute New Testaments in predominately Muslim neighborhoods. The outbreak of war interrupted their efforts and before they could leave, the airport was bombed. They moved into the mountains above the city, then evacuated by boat to Cyprus. Now, after an overnight stay in Philadelphia, they are home.

Hidden within that simple

Hidden within that simple description of the previous nine days are hours of uncertainty, moments of terror, fear, frustration and doubt, followed by certainties, and finally the peace of God.

"I know one prayer meeting we had," Ron continues. "[God] just laid on my heart that everything was going to be OK ... I felt in my heart that He said, 'Amy is painting a tapestry of her life and her painting is not finished."

The bus that carried families of the 10 team members wound its way from Forney, a small farming community edging into suburbia, through the



REUNITED — Army and Ron Byrd embrace as a prayer of thanksgiving is offered before a bus delivers them to their home church, First Church in Forney, Texas. She was part of a team from the church that was stranded in Lebanon when war broke out. She and the rest of the volunteer team had just arrived at Dallas-Fort Worth International Airport after being evacuated by boat through Cyprus. (BP photo by Bill Bangham)

Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex to the international airport.

"I don't know what I'm going to say to her," Ron says. "I'll probably just hold her." It won't be long before he

It won't be long before he finds out. The bus parks outside the arrival gate. The team bursts from the gate into the arms of their loved ones. Cries. Whoops. Hugs. Celebrations. Everyone talking at once. Then quickly, they are on the bus and making their way home.

Bit by bit, pieces of their story come out. Someone tells about the worship service in Beirut where Jimmy Pritchard, their pastor, spoke. Just as he was introduced, an explosion shook the building, rattling the pews. When he rose to speak, he said, "We are in the palm of [God's] hand ... and the safest place to be in the world is the center of God's will."

Amy Byrd sits with one arm around Ron's neck. "I went to Beirut [because] I was compelled," she says. "When Brother limmy stood up in the pulpit one Sunday morning and invited the congregation to participate in this trip, I turned to my husband and said, 'Ron, I'm going to go on that,' and he said OK.

"From that point on, I was single-minded and excited. Even if I had known there was danger and war ... I don't know that I had another choice. There was such a deep peace about participating in this particular trip."

She recounts the hospitality she encountered in Muslim

homes and the kindness of Lebanese Baptists, carrying [the team] to safety, sheltering and feeding them. She talks about standing shoulder to shoulder with them while chaos engulfed their city and how they began ministering in the name of Jesus to Muslim families displaced by the hostilities.

Once on the ship, Amy set up a cot on the fantail of the ship and watched Beirut recede into the distance. "We had a beautiful view," she says. The city was covered in smoke. A Lebanese woman sat in front of her and took pictures.

"She put her camera down...
and put her head in her hands
and just began to weep," Amy
recounts. "I thought, What must
be going through her mind?
Will I ever see Beirut again? Will
I ever see my family or friends
again? What will be left?"

# BAPTISTS

# THE SECOND FRONT PAGE

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#### Good news remains

LIMASSOL, Cyprus (BP) — Southern Baptists and many other foreign Christians may have left Lebanon, but the Gospel hasn't. In the past month, Southern Baptists who work in the Middle East have seen Muslim friends go deeper with them than ever before in spiritual conversations about the Bible and Jesus Christ. "I can say with the very fiber of my being that [Muslims] are a people who God is going after for Himself," said a Southern Baptist woman who was evacuated by ship from Beirut to Cyprus. "God is jealous for their allegiance. He's jealous for their very lives. He is very much stirring up the nations for Himself." There have been many reminders of God's care during recent days, said a Southern Baptist couple forced to evacuate. They and other parents saw God care for their children in a very personal way amid the suffering and chaos of war. The evacuation has forced some Southern Baptists to close the doors to their homes for months, maybe years. But there is also a sense of something beginning. "There are a lot of people who are spiritually hungry and I think that this war has started to stir up the spiritual hunger even more," one of the evacuees said. "There's a part of me that's thinking that maybe God does not want a lot of foreigners there right now. Similar to China ... maybe it's time for local believers to step up to the plate even more. God knows. I don't know, but God knows." For a photo and voice-over recap of the evacuation from Lebanon, go to http://bpnews.net/mideast\_evac/index.html.

#### Looking back

#### 0 years ago

An intentionally set fire partially destroys the educational building of Beacon Church, Yazoo City. It was the sixth arson fire at a predominately black church in Mississippi in recent months.

The Brotherhood men's ministry of Leake Association donates items to support programs at Central Hills RA camp: .22 caliber rifles for the firing range, a 1964 Dodge pickup, and an eight-year-old mare.

Mississippi College president D.M. Nelson predicts servicemen returning from WWII duty and women leaving the work force will push the Baptist-affiliated school past the 800-student mark for the first time in the institution's history.

# New Orleans Seminary to offer Hymnology course

August 21 begins the fifth of eight music courses at seven locations in Mississippi sponsored by New Orleans Seminary. The eight courses are Song Leading; Worship Planning; Reading Music: Rhythm/Pitch; Reading Music: Harmony/Melody; Hymnology; Music Administration/Staff Relations; Survey of Music Resources Class Voice.

These courses are designed to provide basic training for bivocational music directors and other music leaders in churches. The eight courses meet two

hours per week. Each course is eight weeks in length.

The cycle of courses is scheduled over a two-year period. Each course is independent and has no prerequisite. Each student who completes the eight courses earns a Church Music Certificate from New Orleans Seminary plus a

credit of eight hours toward an on campus degree program.

There is a one-time registration fee of \$25.00. The cost of each course is \$125.00. A \$60.00 scholarship is available for all first-time students. Students already enrolled are not eligible. The grant is limited to one person per church. The fifth course, Hymnology, will meet once a week for two hours for eight

consecutive weeks at the following locations and times:

- Broadmoor Church, Madison beginning August 21 (7-9 p.m.). Jimmy McCaleb, teacher (601) 924-1233.
- First Church, Booneville beginning August 28 (7-9 p.m.). LuAnne Ford, teacher (662) 728-6272.
- Northcrest Church, Meridian beginning August 21 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). Buddy McElroy, teacher (601) 681-6615 or (601) 679-1887.
- Hernando Church, Hernando beginning August 21 (7-9 p.m.). Barry Tweedy, teacher (662) 429-6361.
- Tri-County Association, Columbia beginning August 22 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). Jimmy McCaleb, teacher (601) 924-1233 or (601)292-3273.
- First Church, Greenville beginning August 22 (7-9 p.m.). John Burke, teacher (662) 334-9452.
- Winston Association, Louisville beginning August 21 (6:30-8:30 p.m.). Dave Tribble, teacher (662) 803-9990.

These classes could be offered at other locations in the state, where eight to 10 students are interested in enrolling. For more information, contact Jimmy McCaleb in the Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3273 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 273. E-mail:jmccaleb@mbcb.org.

### Ag meetings set August 25-26

A joint meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Agricultural Missions Fellowship and the Agricultural Development Foundation will be help on August 25-26 at

Central Hills Retreat near Kosciusko.

At the Agricultural Missions Fellowship meeting, which begins at 2:30 p.m. on August 25, Venezuelan national missionary Florentine Suarez will one of the guest speakers and will describe the Garden of Eden project in his country by which people are taught to raise vegetables and small food animals in enclosed areas around their homes. The project is sponsored in part

by the Agricultural Development Foundation.

Will Howie of Water Valley will speak on the Living Waters for the World program that provides safe drinking water for needy people in many areas of the world. Also included on the Agricultural Missions Fellowship agenda are reports on other projects supported by the organization and election of officers for the commissions.

cers for the coming year.

The semi-annual meeting of the Agricultural Development Foundation is

scheduled for 10 a.m.-2:45 p.m. on August 26. All Mississippi Baptists interested in agricultural missions are invited to attend. Overnight accommodations and food service are available. For more information, contact Carol Wright at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3334 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 334. E-mail: cwright@mbcb.org.

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Last week in DIRECTIONS the directions were wrong. While inviting everyone to come and be a part of or at least in attendance at the Coast Coliseum to hear and experience How Great is Our God, the information said that it would be on August 17. That is INCORRECT. The event takes place on Saturday, August 19, at 4:00 p.m.

#### DRIVING WITH YOUR FOOT ON THE BRAKE

Some years ago there was a sweet little lady in our church who was having problems with her car. I suppose another way to say it is that her car was having problems with her. She had to put her car in the shop repeatedly to have the brake pads changed or her brakes worked on. It appeared as though she had just gotten a lemon of a car that wore out the brakes excessively. After several trips to the shop and having things fixed, the mechanic discovered what was happening. This lady drove her car with one foot on the gas and the other one on the brake. While that is a dangerous habit, it is also destructive. She wanted to go somewhere; but she also wanted to be able to stop instantly if needed. As a result of driving along with her foot gently on the pedal in case she needed to come to a halt, she wore out one set of brake pads after another. Of course, that can become dangerous. While fixing her brakes, they also gen-tly instructed her that this was not a good thing for a number of reasons. Other than wearing her brakes out and making it dangerous and possibly not being able to stop her car she also was putting herself at risk in an emergency situation by hitting the wrong peddle, the gas, instead of the brake or vise versa. Any driving instructor will tell you that it is not wise to ride with one foot on the gas and one foot on the brake.

Through the years I have observed numerous folks who ride along in their Christian life with their foot resting on the brake. That approach is not good for the journey in the Christian life either. I feel reasonably sure that for some folks it just becomes a habitual practice, and they do not even know that they are riding with their foot on the brake. In what ways do people put their foot on the brake?

One way is by being negative. A person with a negative attitude generally keeps one foot on the brake while coasting along. Some people cruise along ready to stop the progress regardless of what the issue is. Anything that comes up, any proposal made, or any new thought is respond-



Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

ed to in the negative. They are always ready to respond quickly with no, or it won't work, or that is a bad idea.

Not long ago a man who was a manager of an organization that was in theory designed to help people get fired was released from his job. The explanation given for his dismissal was that his first thought, his first response was always no. Whatever the request and however significant or critical it might be he did not think that anything could be done to help. Although he often did help and worked through some of the negatives, he always kept his foot on the brake which to the people he was responding to was more like his foot was on their neck.

Someone has described folks who can only see the negative as folks who are born in the objective case and the kickative mood. I am not talking about folks who are thoughtful, understand the difficulties, and help to deal with possible pitfalls, but I am talking about folks who are just always against everything. They come to church, go to class, sit through business meetings, and talk in the halls with a negative, down-cast attitude. They ride along the journey of the Christian life with their foot on the brake.

I remember some years ago a church that was doing great. They were growing, there was a sweet spirit, they were reaching out to folks, and their youth group was just exploding. One person in the church was so impressed, blessed, and thankful to God for what was taking place that he gave the church a brand new van. The vehicle could be used by anyone, but especially it would be helpful in providing transportation for the young peo-

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ple. When the gift, including the tag and the initial insurance, was presented to the church, one man got up and was so negative that he convinced the church to vote to reject the gift. He pointed out the uncertainty of the cost of gas and oil, liabilities that would exist if someone were to get hurt, and questioned when the church was ever told to be in the transportation business anyway. You talk about putting the brakes on — he did. Within a few short months all of the excitement had been sucked out of the church, all of the forward momentum had been lost, many of the young people had drifted away, and the negative thinker and the people he had influenced were able to sit back in their church and turn their thoughts to wondering why things were going down hill.

The second way that people put their foot on the brake is by

being neutral. Just think about this. You may not have your foot on the brake in your church, but where will you go if you just do nothing? Try this experiment. Get out on an interstate highway somewhere when the traffic is light to nonexistent. Get your car up to about 70 mph, take your foot off the gas, maybe even slip the gear into neutral, and see how far you will go. Regardless if it is flat land or hills and hollows, the fact is that you will not go very far. It may look like you are not braking but because you are not doing anything you are going to slow down and stop.

In Matthew 27:36, there is a poignant verse of Scripture that describes the soldiers who had participated in putting Jesus on the cross. It says, "And sitting down, they watched him there." No longer were they driving nails into His hands and feet. No longer were they lashing Him with a whip. They just sat down and watched

Him. At that point they were neutral. In a sense at that point it could be said that the King of Glory was dying from people being neutral. Unless you are doing something for the Kingdom of God you are a drag on the Kingdom of God. There is no neutral ground, and neutrality is not a cardinal doctrine of the Christian life.

The third way some people ride along with their foot on the brake is by being narcissistic. Basically narcissism is selfishness and self-centeredness. The fully, totally narcis-sistic person looks at everything that is happening and any decision that may be before them asking what is in it for me, what does it mean for my life, and if it does not fit my personal desires I will put on the brakes. A church may be dealing with a major decision and it may be obviously in the will of God and clearly a very positive thing to help reach people, but if it does not suit me I am not going along with it.

Sometimes we just need to stop and from a big picture, Christ-honoring view remind ourselves everything is not about us. If you have caught yourself at times riding along in life with your foot on the brake, gently take it off, set it aside, and get moving for the time is short and there is much ground to be covered.

In his little letter of 3rd John, the Apostle points out that there was a man in the congregation, Diotrephes, who loved to have the preeminence among the brethren. He loved the attention coming his way and life being arranged so that he would be in the center. John said he would deal with him when he came. Since John is not on the circuit these days, let's pray that the Holy Spirit of God will come and deal with each one of us to shape us so that our lives will be Savior centered instead of self-centered, and that we will take the brakes off and be as Jesus described His church marching forward so that the gates of hell will not be able to prevail against it.

The author may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. E-mail: jfutral@mbcb.org.



#### YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT Now!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

- Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
- I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
- 3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
- 4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

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#### JUST FOR THE RECORD



1. Baby Dedication, Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale



2. Freedom in Christ Block Party, Janice Church, Perry County

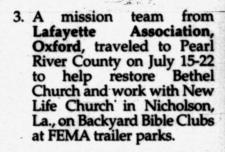


3. Mission Team, Lafayette Marshall Baptist Association



4. Junior High Small Group, First Church, Magee

- Rocky Creek Church, Lucedale, held parent dedication/baby recognition June 18, with five families participating. Greg Barker, pastor. Shown are the participants.
- 2. Janice Church, Perry County, held a Freedom in Christ block party July 2 for the community and surrounding areas, including fun jumps, face painting, food, contests, door prizes, fireworks, and gospel singing by the Pettis Family. Shown are some of the participants.



- Members of the Junior High Small Group from First Church, Magee, traveled to Townsend, Tn., in July, where they performed at a youth revival at Church of the Cove and participated in mission work.
- 5. Several GAs from Star Church, Star, went to GA camp at Camp Garaywa June 5-9 and 26-30. Shown are the GAs who went shopping June 3 for supplies for the two BSU summer missionaries they were supporting this summer.
- Evansville Church, Coldwater, recently held a senior class spring party. Shown are the participants.
- 7. The oldest continuous Hispanic work in northwest Mississippi, Iglesia Nueva Y Esperanza, Sunflower, recently celebrated its seventh anniversary. Shown is pastor Esteban Martinez speaking to the group of 125 in attendance.
- Mike Fondren, pastor of Siloam Church, West Point, is shown licensing Jared Busby to the ministry June 18.
- Midway Church, Jackson, participated in the Celebration of Life Rally by collecting pennies for the Memorial to the Missing. Shown are Elton Smith, left, and Talmadge Baughn, who served as co-chairmen.
- 10. Park Haven Church,
  Laurel, will host a Gospel
  Sing featuring the
  Revelations at 7 p.m. on
  August 19. A love offering
  will be taken. For more
  information, contact Jimmy
  Downs at (601) 649-5357.



5. GAs, Star Church, Star



6. Senior Spring Party, Evansville Church, Coldwater



7. Martinez, Iglesia Nueva Y Esperanza, Sunflower



8. Fondren and Busby, Siloam Church, West Point



9. Celebration of Life Rally, Midway Church, Jackson



#### JUST FOR THE RECORD



11. RAs, GAs, and Mission Friends, North Carrollton Church



12. Stroud and Medina, Lyon Church, Lyon

- 11. The RAs, GAs, and Mission Friends of North Carrollton Church, North Carrollton, recently held a food drive to replenish the church's food pantry. Pictured are youth of the church who participated in the food drive.
- 12. Humburto Medina, a native of Peru and a church planter in the North Delta Association, was ordained by Lyon Church, Lyon, May 6. He is the third Hispanic pastor in six months to be ordained in Mississippi Baptist churches. Shown are pastor Joel Stroud, left, and Medina.
- 13. A total of 50 campers attended West Laurel Church's 2006 Day camp on May 30-July 28. A typical day consisted of Bible study, Chapel, crafts, gym time, speakers, and field trips. There were seven professions of faith.
- 14. Willow Grove Church, Collins, licensed Lee Michael Faler to the ministry July 9. Shown are pastor Kyle Cannon and Faler.



13. Day Camp Participants, West Laurel Church



14. Cannon and Faler, Willow Grove Church, Collins

#### VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



**VBS, Southside Church, Greenville** 



VBS, Vernal Church, Lucedale

Kenny Coker, children's ministry director of Calvary Church, Fulton, led a mission team to Vernal Church, Lucedale, June 11-17 to conduct VBS. Shown are the participants.

Southside Church, Greenville, held its VBS July 17-21, with an enrollment of 62 and two children praying to receive Christ. Shown are the participants.

#### College News



2. Summer Stock, Mississippi College

- 1. Approximately 364 students will graduate in one of three final commencement ceremonies at William Carey College before the school officially becomes William Carey University on August 14. The commencement exercises will be held August 5. The 9:30 a.m. ceremony is for graduates receiving business, education, and psychology and counseling degrees. The 1 p.m. ceremony is for undergraduate degrees from the School of Arts, Humanities and Sciences, Cooper School of Missions and Biblical Studies, the Winters School of Music, School of Business, School of Education and Joseph and Nancy Fail School of Nursing. The 4 p.m. ceremony is for both undergraduate and graduate candidates from the Gulfport and Keesler Air Force Base Campuses. All graduation ceremonies will take place in the Dumas Smith Auditorium
- on the Hattiesburg campus. Commencement speakers include Howell Garner, Bettye Rogers Coward, and Robert Fortenberry.
- 2. Recognizing the need for quality theater instruction in a Christian and creative atmosphere, the Mississippi College Theater Department presents Summer Stock in June of each year. The four-week workshop consists of afternoon classroom participation, rehearsals, and performance experience. Sessions conclude with a dinner theater performance. Pictured during an afternoon Summer Stock workshop session are (from left) Stacey Stokely of Morton, Lauren Weiss of Clinton, Alee Franklin of Picayune, Heidi Winborne of Hattiesburg, and Brandon Hembree of Sumrall.



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ANJL NLQ:KGQLKV-LHLQ

Clue: G = WHave fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitu-

tion. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark One:Eleven...

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ing positions: Minister of Music and MAGEE, MISS., is taking resumes for Minister of Youth. Any one that is inter- the position of youth minister. Please ested, please send resume to Immanuel mail resuems to attention search com-Baptist Church, Attention Personnel mittee, Corinith Baptist Church, 207 Committee, 6949 Highway 61 South, Church Road, Magee, MS 39111 by

Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Miss., is HIGHLAND BAPTIST CHURCH IN accepting resumes for full-time associate VICKSBURG, MISS., IS SEEKING A pastor. Mail resume to: Search PART-TIME YOUTH MINISTER. Committee, 111 Grace Avenue,

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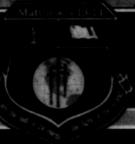
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# Practical Principles for Christian Living



### Bad health helped create a "bad" health care system

The stress of paying for health insurance is enough to give you a heart attack. With rates and deductibles increasing, and coverage decreasing, Americans are crying out for the broken health care system to be mended - but it's not just America. Health care is a concern shared by every other country in the world. Canada, often cited as a shining example of a universal health care system, is plagued with long waiting times for operations, limited access to modern technology, and doctors scurrying to leave the country. Thirty years of government intervention has not fixed their health care problem.

Seventy percent of Americans believe the U.S. health care system is in a state of crisis or at least has major problems, according to Gallup pollsters. The Kaiser Family Foundation conducted a survey in June 2005 and found that over twice as many respondents were more concerned about rising health care costs than they were about the possibility of losing their job or being the victim of a terrorist attack. Twenty-three percent of the respondents reported that they had trouble paying their medical bills even though sixty-one percent of them had health insurance.

Authors of a new book, Healthy, Wealthy, and Wise: Five Steps to a Better Health Care System (AEI Press, 2005), believe that current tax law, which favors consumers buying lowdeductible, low co-payment health plans in lieu of paying expenses out-right, has birthed a health care market where there is no thought about cost and wasteful medical practices. Add those factors to the large number of uninsured and underinsured, plus the burden the aging Baby Boomer population is placing on the health care system, it is not difficult to see why Ámericans are concerned.

So, what can we do about it? We spend over four times as much on health care as we do on national defense. One answer is we take care of ourselves in the first place by becoming more physically fit, avoiding unhealthy lifestyle choices, and eating a healthier diet. Under your doctor's care, you can begin an exercise pro-gram that will help you become more physically fit. Learn how to prepare and eat foods that are good for you and lower the consumption of high-fat and high-sugar foods. Diabetes contributes to the deaths of 1,600 Mississippians



each year. Doctors say Type 2 diabetes is preventable by a diet and exercise regimen that results in a five to seven percent weight loss. The following steps might save your life:

Reach and maintain a reasonable weight. Instead of crash dieting, eat less of the food you like. Try and exercise at least thirty minutes a day. Set a reasonable weight-loss goal. A good long-term goal is losing five to seven percent of your body weight.

Make wise food choices. Take a hard look at the serving sizes of the foods you eat. Decrease your meat and dessert portions and increase fruits and vegetables. Limit your fat intake and reduce the number of calories you eat each day. Your doctor or dietitian can help. Keep a food and exercise log. Write down how much you exercise and what you eat.

Be physically active every day. Regular exercise tackles several risk factors at once. It helps control body weight, decreases cholesterol and blood pressure and helps your body use insulin. Walking is one of the best ways to add exercise to your daily routine. Take the stairs rather than an elevator or escalator. Park at the far end of the lot and walk. Walk or bicycle instead of drive when you can.

While the health care system is frustrating, we can take matters into our own hands regarding our own state of health. By applying the principles above, we can enjoy a greater quality of life. In 1 Corinthians 6:20, Paul reminds us, "For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body."

The Mississippi Baptist Christian Action Commission may be contacted at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3329 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 329. E-mail: jporter@christianaction.com. Web site: www.christianaction.com.

#### REVIVALS & HOMECOMINGS

Bethesda Church, Crawford: Revival, Aug. 20-23; Sun., 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; John McMullen, speaker; Chuck and Jenna Cotton, music.

Black Jack Church, Yazoo County: Revival, Aug. 6-9 at 7 p.m.; Chip Henderson, speaker; Larry Black, music.

Crooked Creek Church, Silver Creek: Homecoming, Aug. 6; Sunday School, 10 a.m., worship, 11 a.m., followed by meal; Charles Ray Dampier, speaker; Pearl Ouartet, music.

Darlove Church, Washington County: Homecoming, Aug. 6; congregational singing, 10:30 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by noon meal and fellowship; Ken West, speaker.

Fellowship Church, Ellisville: 158th homecoming, Aug. 6; Worship, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds and singing; Cecil Hathorn, speaker.

First Church, Lake: Revival, Aug. 6-9; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.. Cliff Pace, speaker; Jerry Peagler, music; Ken McLemore, pastor.

First Church, Ovett: Homecoming, Aug. 6; Sunday School, 10 a.m., worship 11 a.m., followed by meal and 1 p.m.; Tommy Mangum, speaker; Nate Blackledge, pastor.



# MISSISSIPP

First Church, Poplarville: 125th anniversary, Aug 13; special services during the morning and evening, with pot luck lunch at noon; several former staff participating.

First Church, Shannon: Revival, Aug. 6-; High Attendance Day in Sunday School; worship 11 a.m.; lunch to follow; evening worship 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; David Hamilton, speaker.

Hopewell Church, Scott County: Revival, Aug. 6-9; Sun., Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by lunch, and 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Ed Crawley, speaker; Dan Harrison, music.

New Home Church, Bay Springs: Homecoming, Aug. 13; worship, 11 a.m., followed by noon meal and gospel singing; William H. Perkins, Jr., speaker; Ron Swindall, pastor.

Sardis Church, Smith County: 20th annual homecoming, Aug. 6; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed by lunch and afternoon singing; Tim Jordan, speaker; Bob Arender, music; Scott Mangum, pastor.

Sunrise Church, Petal: Homecoming, Aug. 6; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by dinner on the grounds and afternoon sing, 1 p.m.; Gerald Buckley, speaker; Roger Blackwell, music.

Union Church, Brookhaven: Revival, Aug. 6-8; Sun., 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Tue., 7 p.m.; Daniel Hall, Madison, eaker; Kusty Walton, Forest, music; 11m Lawrence, pastor.

Union Hall Church, Brookhaven: Revival, Aug. 6-9; Sun., Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m., followed by meal and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jon Daniels, speaker; Mike and Angela Britt, music; Billy Joe Deer, pastor.

West McComb, McComb: Revival, Aug. 6-11; Sun., 8:30 a.m., 11 a.m., and 1 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Gene Douglas, speaker; Todd McDaniel, music; Van Windom, pastor.

#### Staff Changes



Myers as pastor. comes Myers from Goshen Church, Magee, holds and degrees from

County,

Mt. Pisgah

Church, Carroll

called Timothy

Myers

Clarke College, Mississippi College, and New Orleans Seminary.

has called Michael Beene as minister of youth. Beene resides in McComb and is a junior at the University of Southern Mississippi Hattiesburg.

Memorial Church, New Augusta, has called Jason Sheffield as minister of music. He is a recent graduate of William Carey College in Hattiesburg and previously served as minister of students at Sandersville Church in Jones County.





#### **LETTERS TO** THE EDITOR

Unsigned letters will not be printed. No multi-copy or form letters will be used.

Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.

Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)

Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.

Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.

No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a threemonth period.

When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.

#### STAND ON WORD

As reported in The Baptist Record on June 22, Pastor Benjamin Cole from Parkview Church in Texas and Pastor Tom Ascol from Grove Church in Florida spoke to the messengers at the Southern Baptist Convention about making our scriptural and traditional position on alcohol more flexible. What degree of flexibility they had in mind is unknown.

Thankfully, four-fifths of the messengers voted to stand firmly opposed to the manu-facture, sale, and use of alcohol. Further light was shed on the gravity of this issue as the messengers also saw fit to prohibit any user of alcohol from serving on any board or agency. I applaud this action, although I foresee difficulties in enforcing it.

Some will fall by the wayside in their search for more liberal and flexible congregations. We must stand resolute and immovable in our beliefs based on the Holy and inspired Word of God.

Haskel Stringer Bay Springs

#### TAKEN ABACK, TOO

Editor:

In the June 29 issue, the lead story is entitled, "Page surprised, 'taken aback' by elec-tion." I find it disturbing and am "taken aback" by his statement that he would support the appointment of a person who openly claims to be a five-point Calvinist.

I am not acquainted with Page, but I am

acquainted with the five points of Calvinism. Is the money the only criteria for determining whether a person is a Baptist? In our efforts to be inclusive, are we going to include anyone who will pay money to the Cooperative Program with-out requiring that they share our faith? We now have churches who claim to be

Baptist but won't use the name. We now have

a Southern Baptist Convention president who would support the appointment of a five point Calvinist. I shudder to think what may be next. Acceptance of transubstantiation in the Lord's Supper? Infant baptism because of total depravity? Deification of Mary?

Baptists evidently need some history lessons. We did not come to our current doctrinal stance by accident. In my opin-ion, Baptist doctrine is not negotiable. We are Baptist for a reason — we believe the Bible is the sole authority for our doctrines and practices.

Charles L. Nail, pastor Foxworth Church, Foxworth

#### **BE INCLUSIVE**

The June 22 issue of The Baptist Record stated that the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention was marked by repeated calls for cooperation and missions. It was encouraging to read that the new president, Frank Page, was elected on the first ballot and that his church gave 12.4% last year to the Cooperative Program. Now we have a president who is a leader by example in giving to missions.

Then my heart sank as I read what Page had to say, "We need to strengthen our work together as we reach out to godly conservatives who have not been utilized in the past." Then he said appointees to committees would have four criteria: a sweet spirit, heart for evangelism, commitment to biblical inerrancy, and great support for the Cooperative Program.

It seems he could not pass up an opportunity to wave the "conservative" flag as if to say a man has to be conservative to be godly. Jesus never said being a conservative was a qualification for entering the Kingdom. Neither did Iesus say or imply that a person must be committed to biblical inerrancy. However, he did say all men shall know we are His disciples if we have love for one another.

I am reminded that the Pharisees were conservatives in Jesus' day, and He was continually pointing out the error of their ways.

It also tells me that Page should have a sweet spirit and be inclusive rather than partisan. May God help all of us to truly have a sweet spirit, even toward those who may be different from us.

Ray Hodges Silver Creek

#### **FOLLOW HIS EXAMPLE**

Editor:

I do not believe that abortion is any more right than I believe adultery, homosexuality, lying, covetousness, and dishon-oring one's father or mother are right. However, Jesus never spent time or words judging or condemning those who com-mitted such atrocities. Rather, he exemplified love and compassion toward those who were rejected by society due to their seeking help.

It seems to be that as Christians (Christ followers), we might be more successful at helping turn our society around if we would follow His example. Although there is no question about the wrongfulness of these and other sins committed by many in our society today — including those who profess to be Christians — in giving the Great Commission Jesus never told us to judge or condemn sinners but rather to be witnesses of His saving power to all who will receive Him.

It is my firm conviction that if we (Baptists in particular) devoted more time and effort to being the living presence of

Jesus Christ in our world by positively shar-ing our faith — sharing what we are for rather than what we are opposed to — we could more effectively serve our Lord and those to whom He has called us to minister. In other words, we can have a more positive effect on society by sharing the love of God in Christ Jesus, who along can change people's hearts and lives, than we can trying to force our moral values on a godless society.

Doyle Ferrell Belmont

#### BEHIND DOUBLESPEAK

Editor:

Thank you for pointing out in the Editor's Notebook in April 30 that Bob Reccord departed the North American Mission Board in disgrace.

When I hear pastors and denominational leaders talk about a leader's "entrepre-neurial bent" and difficulty working "within the denomination structure," I know behind the doublespeak this means the individual wanted to do things his way without oversight, questioning, or input from anyone else.

I remember the days when consensus and input in Baptist circles were the norms. I long for the days of leaders like Owen Cooper (of Yazoo City and the last layman president of the Southern Baptist Convention) and others who understood that leadership in denominational circles meant openness, accountability, and inclusion.

George Luter Jackson

#### NO DIFFERENCE?

I was so excited to see the large crowd at Mississippi Baptist Youth Night on July 21 at the Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson. The Coliseum had an air of excitement as my youth group entered, and God definitely delivered. It was evident that the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) and the group of people in charge of this event put in many hours of prayer and preparation. However, some things that happened disappointed me and were out of the bands of the MBCB.

Toward the end of our worship time, I was surprised to see a roll of toilet paper flung from the "nosebleed" section. Then another, then another. Some teenagers made their way to the stairs only to return later with more rolls of toilet paper - presumably taken from the Coliseum bathrooms. As this continued, I watched students worshiping and oblivious of the "T.P. wars" being hit from behind (in the back of the head) by rolls of toilet paper. I could not believe this was happening at a worship service for our Baptist youth. Where were the youth ministers or leadership with those students?

It is our responsibility (not the MBCB) to monitor our students and help provide an atmosphere of worship and reverence for both our students and those around us. I experience this at most every camp and event. The workers who cleaned up the Coliseum after Youth Night will likely see no difference between our Christian teenagers and the non-Christian teenagers who frequent that building for secular events.

Ministers and adults, let's lock arms as

leaders and help each other guide our students to the proper attitude and actions at our Youth Nights, camps, church services, etc.

Tommy Brogan Minister to students/activities Macedonia Church Brookhaven



#### FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

Set Apart By God John 17:9-23

By Les Colvin

Prayer is one of the wonderful gifts God gives His children. He commands us to pray for one another. It is always comforting to know that someone is praying for us. Years ago, as I was starting my full time ministry, I was serving a church in north Louisiana. In our church was a young man who was an active member of our college class. As I mat to be our college class. As I got to know him, I learned he had a very consistent prayer life. Every time he greeted me at church, he always said "I am praying for you." It was such an encouragement to know that someone was praying for me. As believers, it is an even greater comfort to know that our Savior is praying for us. He is "at the right hand of the father interceding for us" (Romans 8:34). In

John 17, Jesus prays for His disciples and all believers, reminding us that we are "Set Apart by God."

In verses 9-13, Jesus prays for us as we are "in the world." Jesus' death and the time when He would no longer be with the disciples were approaching. In this prayer, we can be strengthened by the truth that He is not leaving us alone. In verse 9 He states that we belong to the Father. We are His children. In verse 11, He prays that the Father would protect them. We have a Heavenly Father who protects His children. Now, we know that God's protection over us does not mean that nothing bad will ever happen to us. The KJV uses the word "kept," which is closer to the original



Colvin

language. It is used of the "keeping power" of God the Father. It means to watch over and preserve. This speaks more of "spiritu-al protection" than physical as seen in Jesus specific requests for the disciples. He prays for their unity, which we'll see in the later verses. In

verse 13, Jesus prays that they will have "His joy" in them. Many say that Christianity is not about feelings. There is some truth to that. We can't always trust our feelings. However, God does care how we feel. He wants us to have joy. The joy that Christ wants us to experience is found in Him and is from Him. One of the greatest truths we can know as believers is that Christ

wants us to experience His joy.
In verses 14-19, Jesus prays
that we will be distinctive in the world. He again prays for our spiritual protection from the evil one. We must never forget that there is an enemy who is "seeking whom He may devour" (1

Peter 5:8). Because of this enemy, living in the world and not "of the world" is one of the most difficult tasks we face as Christians. God expects His children to be set apart so that we may be useful for Him. How can we live set apart and be distinctive in the world? The answer is found in verse 17 where Jesus prays to the Father, "Sanctify them by your truth." This word "sanctify" means to be made separate and holy. Sanctification is that aspect of our salvation where we are becoming like Christ. Whereas salvation is a one time experience, sanctification is the continual process of our being made in the likeness of Christ. Jesus says our sanctification is achieved by the truth of God's Word. Just as it takes "truth" to transform or save us, it also takes truth to sanctify and make us holy and set apart. We will never be distinct and set apart from the world except by abiding in the truth of Word of God.

In verses 20-23 Jesus prays for the disciples to be united in the world. God wants the body

of Christ to live in unity. He gives the relationship between the Father and Son as our guide or example of this unity. In verse 21, Jesus gives the key to our unity among one another. He prays that "they be one in Us." There is no unity apart from that which is in Christ Jesus. In verses 21 and 23, Jesus gives the reason for the church to be united. It is so the world may know that Jesus was sent from God and know that He loves them. The church is God's instrument to reach a lost and dying world. In order for God to effectively use us, we must be united in Him. The world must see Christ in us to be drawn to Him.

God has set us apart to sanctify and make us holy and to let the world see and know Him. The late, great preacher Vance Havner, said, "'We are not to be isolated but insulated," "moving in the midst of evil but untouched by it."

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#### EXPLORE THE BIBLE

How Can I Stay on Course? Eccl. 7:1-4, 5-9; 10-14, 21-22

By Ginger M. Caughman

I love the flag of Alaska with the bright North Star and golden stars of the Big Dipper splashed across a field of royal blue. Sailors used to sail by the stars before more modern navigation instru-ments. The North Star and other constellations helped many stay on course.

Today automobiles can be equipped with G.P. S., a Global Positioning System to help a driver navigate. How can the Christian stay on course? Consider the wisdom of Ecclesiastes along with the entire Bible.

Remember Life's Brevity

We all know the brevity of life! "Only one life will soon be past. Only the things done for Christ will last." There's wisdom in that old poem.

"Whether we live or die we are the Lords." (Romans 14:7-9) Ecclesiastes does not teach that we are better off

dead than alive nor that being sad is better than being glad. No! The key idea is that the reality of death gives us a needed perspective on life (Eccl. 7:2) Likewise the Psalmist admonishes us: "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom." (Psalm

Ecclesiastes should lead us to thoughtful contemplation of how to best live our days.

"This is the day the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it!" (Psalm 118:24). God's wisdom reminds us of the importance of making each day count in light of



Caughman

Heed Criticism and Resist Anger

We live in an imperfect world filled with inaccurate counsel about how best to live. For many people, the lines are blurred between wise and foolish attitudes and behavior." The Bible is the Christian's text-

book! This lesson encourages us to rely on God's wisdom.

A wise person can learn from constructive criticism and resist anger (Eccl. 7:5-9).

Live in the Present and Focus

Regardless of days filled with prosperity or adversity, we can live in the present with an awareness that God is working out His purposes. Focus on today's tasks rather than longing for better days gone by. Live in the present and focus on God-

I am presently working under heavy deadlines of three different assignments. Applying the lesson to my own life: "How can I stay on course?" The words of a faithful saint of God encourage me now as they did when she was my editor years ago. "Heavy deadlines have me in their grip," Dodie Baker wrote. "God will free me to do my best." Then a Scripture. Dodie's encouragement was from her life and from God's Word. "He will keep me in perfect peace when my mind is stayed on Him." I like visuals and wrote in the center of a 4x6 card, "Focus on:" In a large circle, I wrote in caps, "GOD."

Allow for Human Frailty

"There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins." (Eccl. 7:20). This Old Testament reference in our text is renewed by Paul in the New Testament. "None is righteous, no not one." (Romans 3:23). Only our Lord Jesus was that perfect man on earth and we have salvation and hope in none other! These witnessing Scriptures are sometimes called, 'the Roman Road." (Romans 3:10, 23; 6:23; 10:8-10).

A familiar quote attributed to Will Rogers from an Indian saying helps us learn to try to First Church, Magee.

understand the other person by not criticizing them until we walk a mile in their moccasins. In a letter Paul wrote to the Roman church, he admonished them to stop judging one another. (Romans 14:10-13). Christians need to allow for human frailty and be gentle with one another.

These proverbs in Ecclesiastes reflect godly wisdom. The emphasis is on taking the paths marked out by Godly wisdom. We are challenged to rely on God's perfect wisdom to guide us in an imperfect world. To stay on course: "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith," Jesus endured much to help us center our lives on Him and by faith let Him help us stay on course! "Who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, a so that you will not grow weary and lose heart." (Hebrews 12:2-3).

Caughman teaches Sunday School and sings in the choir at

### Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events

news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an email form. Due to increasing virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs may be color or black and white. Instant photos and digital printouts

are not reproducible. Digital photos may be used if submitted as a JPEG file via either (a) e-mail, (b) three-and-a-half inch floppy disk, or (c) CD. Photos must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. All news items are subject to editing,

and all photographs are subject to cropping. Photographs must depict people. No landscape-, building-, or object-only photographs will be printed. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date.

Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. Requests to return photographs must be accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Submit news and photographs to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39295 0530, FAY: (601) 292-3330

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# MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST Youth Night 2006

JULY 21, 2006

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